

# The Commoner.

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## The Elections at Hand.

Next Tuesday's elections in Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania will be watched with interest and variously interpreted. In all of the states the republicans have indorsed the last national platform of the party, and in case of victory will claim that republican principles and republican policies have been approved by the people.

The democrats, on the contrary, have been divided and therefore weakened by the effort of gold democrats to emasculate the party creed. Where they have failed to secure the repudiation of the Kansas City platform they have been sore and disgruntled. Where they have been successful in suppressing the last national utterances of the party they have alarmed and offended the real democrats by rejoicing over what they term "the party's return to conservatism."

In some states national issues have been entirely ignored, and while the reorganizers have thus avoided the charge of discrimination against any particular issue, they have exposed themselves to more bitter attack from the opposition, for the republicans stand ready to force the fight upon any issue which the democrats dodge. If the Kansas City platform democrats were to follow the example set by the gold democrats, the party would be overwhelmingly defeated in all of the states in which the leaders have shown themselves hostile to democratic principles as enunciated last year; but those who kept the faith and made sacrifices during the campaigns of 1896 and 1900 will not falter in their allegiance to the party merely because of temporary defeat. They will support the ticket and then begin at once to perfect an organization which will make it impossible for the reorganizing element to steal another march on the voters.

The reorganizers, where they are in control, are in a position to blame local issues for their defeat if defeat comes, and to claim credit for victory, if victory is won; but this will not deter the regular democrats from doing their duty.

In Iowa the democrats reaffirmed the Kansas City platform, but declared their purpose to make the fight upon state issues. While our party has a normal majority of considerable size to overcome the full democratic strength is likely to be polled.

In Maryland no reference was made to national issues, and the negro question seems to be the main local issue. The failure of the convention to take a position upon national issues leaves the voters in the dark as to the views of the senator, in case a democrat is elected.

In Massachusetts the Kansas City platform was reaffirmed, and ex-Mayor Quincy nominated for governor. The convention was a very harmonious one, and the ticket will doubtless make a good showing. While Mr. Quincy was a gold democrat in 1896, he took an active part in the campaign of 1900, and in his public speeches accepts the democratic platform, preferring to support the democratic party, even though more radical than he would desire, rather than risk a continuation of republican policies.

In Nebraska there is complete fusion, the democrats furnishing a candidate for supreme judge and the populist party the two regents. The Kansas City platform was reaffirmed by the democratic convention, and indications point to an increased fusion vote. The republicans have

imported some of their speakers of national reputation and are striving hard to overcome the depressing influence exerted by the party's mismanagement of the treasury department. The present republican treasurer fails to show where all of the state's money is located, and one of the regents nominated by the convention had to withdraw because it became known that he had not repaid money borrowed of the defaulting state treasurer.

The campaign in New Jersey is being fought on local issues and it is difficult for an outsider (or for an insider, either, for that matter), to make an estimate upon the result.

The returns from Ohio will be watched with the most interest because it is the home of the late president as well as the home of the chairman of the republican national committee. The republicans are trying to turn the assassination of the president to political advantage, and are using his name to rally the lukewarm members of the party. Mr. Kilbourne, the democratic candidate, has the confidence of the masses, and will make an excellent showing, notwithstanding the manner in which he is handicapped by the action of the convention in ignoring the Kansas City platform. He would be much stronger if he were at liberty to combat the republican position on every question. His conduct in past campaigns shows his loyalty to the party and he should have the good will and cordial support even of those who felt aggrieved because the convention gave some evidence of the return to the cowardice and evasion that characterized convention utterances when the gold standard element was in control of the party.

The Pennsylvania election will turn upon state questions and the democrats will be aided to some extent by the anti-Quay republicans—may their tribe increase!

Let every democrat, populist and silver republican be at the polls! The republican party is becoming more and more subservient to the corporate interests of the country and every republican victory makes the leaders more arrogant. We cannot afford to give open support or silent encouragement to the imperialistic-trust-gold standard and bank monopoly policies of the republican party.

## One Eye Open.

When Mr. Bryan spoke at Minneapolis, during the campaign of 1896, Former Senator Washburn addressed a letter to him asking certain questions. It was an unusual thing for a man of Mr. Washburn's prominence to inject himself into a public speech, but Mr. Bryan read his letter at the meeting and responded to it. It seems that Mr. Washburn is getting acquainted with the trust question. In a recent interview he discusses the subject with intelligence and even vehemence. It is gratifying to note some evidence of revolt among the republicans, who are responsible for an administrative policy that permits the trusts to thrive and fatten upon people at large. The Commoner is glad to give circulation to the following extract from Mr. Washburn's interview:

Steel rails can be manufactured today at a fair profit and sold at \$17.50 a ton. At that price the rail mills would make a larger profit on their product than the flouring mills would make by a profit of 10 cents a barrel on flour—which the flouring mills would be glad to make, but do not. From the best information

I have been able to gather, steel rails can be manufactured at about \$16 per ton. Sold as they were two and a half years ago at \$17.50, there was a profit of \$1.50 per ton, which is more than the profit on flour at 10 cents per barrel, and that is a larger profit than is averaged by the flouring mills of this country. Yet such rails are now being sold at \$28 per ton, making it easy to understand, with such enormous profits, how the steel mills are enabled to pay dividends on shares three-fourths of which are composed of water. I do not know just what sum would be required to rebuild these properties, but from what I am able to learn I am satisfied that they can be reproduced at less than one-half the amount for which they are capitalized. The consequence is that the people and consumers of the country are being taxed to this enormous extent in order that the trusts and consolidations may pay such dividends. And yet, with this condition of things, we now have a duty of \$7.80 per ton on steel rails! And what I have here said of steel rails can also be said of structural steel, which now enters into construction of different kinds to such an enormous extent. If this is not robbery I would like to find some stronger word to characterize it.

"Robbery" is a strong word, but Mr. Washburn wants something even stronger. What will he say of an administration that permits the robbery to go on without making an effort to protect the public? Possibly Mr. Washburn has only one eye open; with this he sees the trusts very clearly. When he gets the other eye open he will be able to see the republican party standing behind the trusts and receiving for campaign purposes a part of the money extorted from the people.

## The Negro Question.

The action of President Roosevelt in inviting Prof. Booker T. Washington to dine at the White house was unfortunate, to say the least. It will give depth and acrimony to a race feeling already strained to the uttermost. The race question, so far as it concerns our colored population, presents itself in four phases; first, the legal rights of the black man; second, his educational opportunities; third, his political privileges, and, fourth, his social status.

As to the first there can be no question. The negro is a citizen, and as a citizen is entitled to all the guarantees of the federal and state constitutions. He has freedom to speak and to write; freedom of conscience and the right "to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In these respects there is no distinction between him and the white man. The republicans, when challenged to defend imperialism, are in the habit of referring to the suffrage amendments adopted in some of the southern states, as if the black man of the south and the brown man of the orient were being similarly treated. The fact is, however, that in none of the southern states has an attempt been made to take from the negro the guarantees enumerated in our constitution and in the bill of rights; whereas the Filipino in the orient and the Porto Rican in the West Indies are denied the protection of the constitution. In the south the negro is still a citizen and entitled to the consideration due a citizen. Under republican rule in Porto Rico and the Philippines, however, the inhabitants are subjects and suffer the common lot of those who live under arbitrary power.

In the matter of education the negro is entitled to all the opportunities offered to the white man. The negro must be educated; no community